● 463, 565 Nupe FF52

[Information on the Mallams, combination jurists and Mohammedan scholars, has been placed in category 875. -- Analyst]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

easily turns into discouragement. In Kutigi and Sakpe I have spoken to many farmers who, discouraged by the increasing difficulties that appear to accompany cotton-growing, seemed determined to give it up altogether. We may, I think, draw a valuable lesson from this. If new agricultural schemes are to be introduced they must be brought in already well tried-out and fully adapted to the existing conditions. The adoption of a new crop or technique is to the native in itself a large-scale experiment; to make the people adopt a technique which has not been fully tried-out means to double this element of experimenting. It will prevent the new knowledge from being absorbed quickly in the 'body of Nupe farming-knowledge' on which the people feel they must be able to rely, and may eventually give them over to disappointment and discouragement.

BY-PRODUCTS OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest-cultivation produce as by-products certain raw materials which are used in Nupe home industries and handicrafts. Thus the grain-stalks which are left on the fields after the harvest are used for the making of fences, doors, and bedsteads: cut in fine strips, grain and maize stalks are used for mat-making; a vegetable dye, black and red, is gained from the stalk of a certain species of sorghum (*dindórogi*). Small trees which do not bear fruit are occasionally cut down by the owner of the field on which they stand and used as timber for house-repairs and suchlike. In all these cases it is the cultivator and his family themselves who use the plant or tree; the by-products of agriculture have no marketing value. This is different in the case of firewood and grass for thatching which, as I have mentioned already, is collected or cut by the Nupe women and marketed by the men (see p. 200).

It is frequently quoted as a characteristic feature of African agriculture that every part of a plant or tree that can be used in any way is actually utilized by the people. This is only partly true in Nupe. Only a small proportion, for example, of the grain-stalks is used in the various ways just described. A great many farmers are either unskilled in the craft which makes use of these by-products, or devote their spare time to other, to them more attractive or profitable, occupations. This comparative failure on the part of the Nupe farmer to utilize to the fullest possible extent the products of his land appears to be connected with the complexity and specialization of the productive system of the country. As we shall see later, only certain groups or individuals have specialized in mat-making, the making of bedsteads, or dyeing. The influence of specialization involving a clear-cut division between the agriculturist and the craftsman who utilizes the by-products of agriculture is most conspicuous in this case; big trees, when not fruit-bearing, may also be cut down and used as timber. But no farmer would ever attempt to cut a big tree himself for fear of bungling the job and being injured or even killed by the falling tree. He calls in the professional wood-cutter, who possesses both the necessary skill and experience and the special magic which alone can prevent the spirit of the tree from revenging himself on

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

241 463 the person who is destroying his abode. These big trees have a money-value, and are sold to the wood-cutters and carpenters, who use the timber in their own industry. On the whole the Nupe are reluctant to cut down big trees, especially in the town, for they appreciate the shade which they give. But it happens occasionally that the owner of a barren tree, in need of money, has it cut down and sells the timber to wood-cutters or carpenters.

185 651 322 In the interest of forest-preservation the felling of certain trees has been made subject to the payment of a licence fee varying in amount from 5*s.* 6*d.* to £1 or more. This new rule involves an economic re-adjustment which the people—professional timber-workers as well as ordinary farmers—have not yet been able to achieve. The carpenters of Bida almost went on strike when the new licence was introduced, and refused to manufacture any more wooden stools and other products of their craft for fear of being unable to sell their goods for the higher price which the licence would necessitate. Another illustration is the case of [672] an old man, a carpenter, who, unaware of the new rule, had bought a barren locust-bean tree in Bida for felling, for 7*s.* 6*d.* When he was requested to pay the licence fee of 5*s.* 6*d.* he was unable to do so. His case came before the Bida Court, but in consideration of his poverty and age the court reduced the licence fee for him to 1*s.* 4*d.* It is too early yet to say what effect this licence will have on the Nupe wood-working industry: whether it will lead to a technical readjustment and a change in the kind of timber used, or to a gradual deterioration and eventual disappearance of the indigenous wood-carving technique, which is already feeling the competition of the cheaper, and infinitely uglier, products in Western style: packing-case chairs and tables, deck-chairs, and the like.[1]

[323 325 177] [1] It is to be feared that it will be this latter case with which Nupe wood-carving will meet. In other crafts these changes in material and partly style are already an accomplished fact: thus the Bida glass-workers have almost completely abandoned making their own glass, and make their bangles and beads of smelted down bottle glass of European manufacture; similarly the Nupe blacksmiths buy cheap sheet-iron at the trading stores, and no longer smelt their own iron ore.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER XV

INDUSTRIES (*continued*)

INDIVIDUAL CRAFTS

463 467 THE guild-organized crafts represent, as we have seen, a specific social group or class—the class of skilled artisans—which only occasionally enlarges its membership by adopting individuals from other professional or social groups. The individual crafts, on the other hand, present a vaguely defined and ever fluid group which recruits itself from every stratum of Nupe society, the peasant class as well as the 'intelligentsia', slaves and clients as well as members of the nobility. We shall see presently that men of the titled classes who have lost their former sources of income frequently adopt an individual craft as a new means of livelihood. The technical conditions which contribute to make the guild-organized crafts into 'closed groups', organized on the lines of more or less intensive co-operation, are absent in the industries which are carried out as 'free professions'. Tailors, straw-hat makers, or mat-weavers need no workshops; they can work anywhere, in any part of the house, in sleeping-huts as well as in a corner of the *katamba*. Some craftsmen even wander from place to place and practise their work wherever there is a prospect of trade. Many Bida tailors, for example, have made a practice of visiting neighbouring villages on the market days or at the time of the annual ceremonies and festivals, when they can be sure of finding plenty of work. Nor does their work involve co-operation, or necessitate the use of expensive tools. Mat-weavers work with their hands, straw-hat makers use a block of clay or wood (called *ekugi*) over which they shape the crown of the head, a tool which they can easily make themselves. Tailors, embroiderers, or leather-workers need, in addition to the material, only needle and thread.

463 Although there exist, specially in Bida, experts in these crafts who practise them as their only profession, the technique itself is simple enough to be learned by anyone in a very short time. We remember the farmers who carry out a handicraft as *bucd* work in their spare time. People in the town similarly practise these handicrafts as leisure-time occupations, in addition to other work, or as a lucrative pastime. Many learned men and students of the Koran do a little tailoring beside. Embroidery, a more delicate work, involving taste and a certain skill, has become the pastime occupation of many members of the 'intelligentsia'. Of hat-making, on the other hand, the Nupe say that it is the ideal occupation for 'lazy people', who can do nothing else, meaning particularly those impoverished 'people of quality' who are neither skilled nor resourceful enough to find other means of livelihood.

463 868 The varied demands of the Nupe markets have also called into being various other, minor, handicrafts, some of which are so easy that young boys of 10 or 11 are encouraged to take them up as a first *bucd* occupa-

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

tion, for their pocket-money. For example, a father would give his boy 2*d.* to buy cotton-thread which the boy would then plait into trouser strings and sell for 3*d.*; or boys work thin strips of leather into the lacquered amulet strings which the Nupe wear round the neck, making again a profit of 1*d.*

A few examples may illustrate the economic scope of these handicrafts. Straw hats are made of narrow strips of plaited grass, sewn together in spirals. The making of a good straw hat takes from three to four days if the hat-maker buys the plaited strips of straw ready-made, and five days if he plaits them himself. A plain hat is sold for 4*d.* to 6*d.*, the material costing between 1*d.* and 2*d.* A more expensive type of hat, in which part of the crown is covered with leather-work, is the product of two craftsmen, straw-hat maker and leather-worker. A hat of this kind sells for 1*s.* The Bida tailors produce a variety of goods: caps both plain (machine-made) and embroidered; gowns, trousers, saddle-cloths. A plain white cap is sold for 4*d.*, the cost of the material being 2*d.*; a tailor can produce four such caps a day. The embroidered caps are sold for 1*s.*, the material costing 6*d.*; one cap is made in three days. Plain white gowns, also machine-made, are sold for 7*s.* 6*d.*, the cost of the material being 5*s.*; it takes one or two days to make. A simple saddle-cloth takes from three to five days to make; the cost of the material is 6*d.*, and it is sold for 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* A more elaborate cloth, embroidered and dyed in various colours, takes twenty days to make; the cost of the material is 3*s.*, and it is sold for 10*s.* An embroidered gown is made in fifteen to twenty days. Embroidered Bida gowns are famous all over Nigeria; they are sold for £3 to £5 in Bida, and for much more in the north. The cost of the gown itself (which is made by the ordinary tailor) and of the material used in the embroidery comes to between 15*s.* and 30*s.*; the profit of the craftsman is thus between £2 and £3. But then, he may not be able to sell a gown of this kind, or receive an order for an embroidered gown, oftener than once a year.

We have already mentioned that certain villages, e.g. Kutigi, are famous for their mat industry. Every man and boy in Kutigi works mats in his spare time—and spare time here means just as much the leisure season of the year as every hour that can be spared from farm-work. When sitting in front of their houses in the evenings, even when walking home from the farms, the people are working: they carry a supply of dried grass dyed in different colours, in a kind of quiver under the arm and, while they walk or talk, their fingers are busy plaiting the grass into long, narrow strips. The strips are 3 or 4 inches wide, and up to 15 yards long. The Nupe make oval mats, in which the long strips are sewn together in a multicoloured spiral pattern; or square mats, in which the strips, cut to the same length, are sewn together edge to edge, again in a multicoloured design. The Nupe also make square mats of split sorghum and maize stalks, often dyed in red, yellow, and black, which are harder of texture and have a glossy surface. The oval mats take from five to seven days to make; the cost of the material—grass brought from the river swamps (see p. 200)—and the dye is 5*d.*; the mat is sold in Kutigi for 9*d.* or 10*d.*, and in Bida, after it has passed through

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

the hands of a middleman, for 11*d.* or 1*s.* The square grass mats take ten days to make; the material costs 7*d.* or 8*d.*, and the mat is sold for from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 2*s.* The mats made of stalks take a fortnight to make; the material costs nothing, as the stalks are found on the farm of the craftsman, and the dye is produced from the sorghum stalks; a plain mat of this kind is sold for 8*d.*, a dyed mat for 1*s.*

If we reduce these various figures illustrating cost and profit to the average profit per day made by the individual craftsman (assuming that he is always working to full capacity) we obtain the following table:[1]

Commodity	*Profit per day*
Straw hats	1*d.*
Grass-mats, oval	1*d.*
Grass-mats, square	1½*d.*
Mats made of stalk	1½*d.*
Caps, embroidered	2*d.*
Saddle-cloth, plain	3*d.*
Saddle-cloth, embroidered	4*d.*
Caps, machine-made	8*d.*
Gowns, machine-made	1*s.* 10*d.*
Gowns, embroidered	3*s.* 0*d.*

It will be seen that the Nupe price system is highly discriminative both with regard to the taste and skill needed in the production of a particular article and to the factor of risk involved in the production of more expensive and 'luxury' goods, the demand for which is less widespread. Hat-making, regarded commonly as the easiest craft of all, and at the same time a craft working for large constant demand, is remunerated most cheaply; the embroidering of gowns, which involves considerable taste and skill, and which can reckon only with a comparatively small and irregular demand, is remunerated most highly. This calculation of price and profit holds good similarly for the other products on our list. However, there are two conspicuous exceptions: machine-tailored gowns and machine-tailored caps command a price quite out of proportion with the other products of Bida handicrafts. We shall return later to this anomaly.

Even in these individual crafts we find whole families or household groups following the same profession. But just as often we find households in which three or four different professions are represented, and houses in which tailors, hat-makers, embroiderers, and, say, cushion-makers practise their craft at the same time, in the same *katamba*. In these crafts which involve no special training and in which the novice derives no special benefit from partnership with the more experienced older men, individual preferences have free play and outweigh possible tendencies to follow the example of one's family or one's elders. Bida

[1] At the time when these figures were recorded prices were lower than usual (see p. 292). The relation between the various prices, however, had remained unchanged. The profits quoted for mat-making in Kutigi supplement the statement made previously that mat-making represents a lucrative leisure-time occupation for the Nupe farmer. The demand for mats is, in fact, increasing, and latterly Kutigi mats have been exported to England through the United Africa Company.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

men are always ready to try their hand at something new, and changes of profession are frequent. The record is held, perhaps, by a Bida man who started as a mat-maker (the occupation of his older brother), changed over to cushion-making, then to tailoring, and eventually to leather-work, which he found more lucrative and which he is practising at present. *Efakó* co-operation on the narrowest basis, between father and unmarried sons, occurs occasionally. Thus in a family of embroiderers a father and two sons worked together; working on the same gown, the father would execute the more elaborate designs, while his two sons carried out the simpler embroidery; the sons were maintained by the father, and all earnings went to him. With simpler kind of work, this co-operation is reduced further, and we find, for example, this arrangement between a father and his unmarried son, both straw-hat makers: the father took half of his son's earnings, and in return maintained him, and would in due course pay part of his bride-price (he would be unable to bear the full expense). But in the majority of cases this rudimentary co-operation, too, disappears, and even unmarried sons work entirely on their own.

One might wonder whether these 'individualistic' crafts have not, at some previous stage, shown a larger measure of co-operative organization. Remembering the weakening of guild-organized crafts under the pressure of modern conditions, we might, in fact, ask whether the individual crafts as we find them to-day do not represent merely a final stage of that incipient disintegration. This is indeed the case in one of the industries practised to-day as individual crafts—leather-work. Leather-work involves specialized technique and skill in much higher measure than do the other individual handicrafts. But it also used to involve comparatively large-scale co-operation of a group of workers, in the sense of an efficient division of labour, which was meant to ensure the execution of large and frequently urgent orders. A guild-head, called *Magají*, organized and controlled group production; he also acted as the official intermediary between the craftsmen and the king, who was, again, their most important customer: for the Bida leather-workers supplied a large proportion of the military equipment of the Nupe army, such as saddlery and leather shields, sword-sheaths, and quivers for arrows.

The individual craft which is most a product of modern conditions is machine-tailoring. It introduces certain new features into the productive system of Nupe which are of special interest to the student of culture contact. Machine-tailoring does not demand long training or special skill—young men learn to use a sewing-machine in a week. The machine-tailor can reckon with a very constant demand for his services. The number of machine-tailors in Nupe has, in fact, greatly increased even during the periods which I spent in the country. In 1936, for example, I found six sewing-machines in Kutigi market, against three in 1934. Machine-tailors, like ordinary tailors, will regularly visit village markets (walking perhaps ten miles or more, carrying the sewing-machines on their heads), and appear in villages a fortnight or month before an annual festival, when their services will be greatly in demand.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

CHAPTER XVI
FREE PROFESSIONS

463 IT is not surprising that a rich and complex culture like Nupe should possess its clearly defined *artes liberales*—its professional scholars, scientists, and artists, or, in a terminology more akin to the native conception, its Mallams, barber-doctors, and drummers and dancers. I will leave the discussion of the profession of Mohammedan scholars for the chapter on education, and deal here with the last two of these 'free professions'.

BARBER-DOCTORS

'Free professions' in the sense in which we are using the term here does not necessarily mean 'individualistic' professions or professions unattached to any organization or co-operative unit. If what I have said in the preceding chapter about the meaning of guild-organization is correct, we may expect to find it developed also in the field of these native *artes liberales*. In fact, we do find it, adjusted to the new field of activity, in the barber-doctors of Nupe. We can no longer speak here of home industry; nor is the element of co-operation and mutual assistance the same as in the industries. But the other factors that tend to call into being a closely co-operative organization are clearly visible: we find again the necessity of long, specialized training, even to the degree of adoption into a trade secret; we also find the existence of a constant 'market' for the products and services of the craft; and lastly, we find a close relation between the group of craftsmen and the political system of the country.

305 754 As in medieval Europe and the Orient, the barber of Nupe, *gozan*, is also doctor and surgeon. His activities are numerous: he cuts the hair of men, women, and children; he shaves the head and cuts the tribal marks of newborn babies at the name-giving ceremony. For a tenth of a penny he cuts finger- and toe-nails: a few barbers have specialized in tattooing. The barbers also dispense medicines (mostly worthless[1] infusions and charred powders made of herbs) for every known disease; they perform certain minor surgical operations—circumcision or blood-letting—and administer the *tsware*, a potent inhalation of the smoke from certain medicinal herbs. Certain barbers know the secret of contraceptive medicines, others know cures against barrenness; others, again, are experts in the treatment of lunacy. This far-reaching competency is the most characteristic feature of the craft of Nupe barber-doctors. Leaving aside the ordinary routine work of the barber and certain simpler operations such as the cutting of tribal marks, we may say that every barber

[1] This judgement is based on an analysis in the Wellcome Research Laboratory in London, for which I am greatly indebted to this institution, of certain drugs made by the Nupe barber-doctors which I had brought home from Nigeria. The discussion of the more specifically medical questions I must leave for a future publication.

[p. 298]

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include barber-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).[31]

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuši*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[32]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[33]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[34]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciši*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[31] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[32] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[33] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[34] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.